

'WE CAN BUILD A MASS ANTI-RACIST MOVEMENT'

1,300-STRONG CONFERENCE PLEDGES TO STOP THE RIGHT >>PAGES 10&11



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WORKERS SLAM NEW MOVE TO DENY CARE TO MIGRANTS

TORIES' RACIST NHS LIES

'Blame the cuts and privatisation for crisis,' say health workers

NEW UP-FRONT identity checks in the NHS that came into force on Monday are discriminatory and dangerous.

They are a vicious escalation of the Tories' clampdown on so-called "health tourism".

Sick people will need proof they have lived in Britain for the past six months to receive free care. If not, they have to pay up or show they have health insurance.

NHS workers are furious. Chrissie Gardner, equalities officer of the Unite union's Bristol health branch, told

Socialist Worker, "It's ridiculous. It's a diversion from the real NHS crisis caused by cuts and privatisation.

"We won't be border guards. As health workers we can't refuse treatment for anybody. It's just racism."

Health workers and others from the Docs Not Cops campaign protested with a mock immigration barrier in front of the Department of Health on Monday.

The new move is a burden on patients and



BRISTOL HEALTH worker
Chrissie Gardner

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CATALUNA

Catalans build fightback against repression

THE SPANISH state's repression has provoked furious resistance.

Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy is in the process of shutting down the Catalan government.

The Catalan parliament was set to discuss a response—which could mean declaring independence.

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BREXIT



Humiliated May faces deepening Tory crisis

THERESA MAY faces further humiliation at the hands of the European Union—and her own backbenchers.

And it's not just Brexit that's testing the Tories.

Pressure is mounting on May to stop the rollout of the Universal Credit benefit which has plunged people into poverty.

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ABORTION RIGHTS

Celebrating 50 years of the 1967 Act

THIS MONTH marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act—one of the most important breakthroughs for working class women.

The Act meant that women no longer had to resort to illegal and dangerous backstreet abortions.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Why was showboat Corbyn there?

The Daily Mail newspaper is incensed that Jeremy Corbyn was in Brussels at the same time as Theresa May last week

'The Evening Standard, Russia Today with less George Galloway'

First secretary of state Damian Green attacks George Osborne's paper

'Have you been groped by someone rich and powerful?'

The Sun's sensitive approach to abuse

'It's like Reservoir Dogs but with extra ketchup'

Ex-civil service boss Lord Kerslake describes cabinet divisions over Brexit

'In no way do I come from privileged circles'

Lady Antonia Fraser, biographer and daughter of the Earl of Longford, denies that she's posh

'She was in good shape, she was not tired, she was fighting as is her duty'

EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker denies he said Theresa May was 'tormented'



The money was just resting in the academy trust's account

AN ACADEMY trust that recently abandoned its schools siphoned off millions of pounds to its own accounts.

Troublemaker regulars may recall that Wakefield City Academies Trust decided to give up all of its 21 schools last month, just a few days into term. It had run schools across Yorkshire.

The official reason was that the Trust didn't have "the capacity to facilitate the rapid improvement our academies need". But that's little wonder once you've moved all the cash.

At Hemsworth Arts and Community Academy in Pontefract, some £220,000 was transferred to the trust's accounts earlier this year.

A further £216,000 was also moved over. Some £300,000 was transferred to

the trust from Heath View primary school in Wakefield in September 2016. Wakefield City Academy had seen more than £800,000 transferred at the end of 2015.

The trust told governors that these two transfers were loans. But the schools have now been told that the trust no longer views them as loans.

Campaigners have warned for nearly a decade that academies are a way of diverting public money to private hands. This latest asset stripping Trust proves them right.

What's the Tories' solution? Slash funding for state-run schools (see page 3).

The Department for Education (DfE) knows

academies aren't good for children. A leaked draft DfE report last November described "inadequate governance, leadership and overall financial management" at Wakefield City Academies Trust. It pointed out that chief executive Mike Ramsay had been paid over £82,000 for 15 weeks' work.

Yet the DfE now wants another trust to take over the schools. Delta Academies Trust was stripped of three schools in 2015 amid concerns about low standards.

The DfE used the fiasco in Yorkshire to claim that academy trusts "operate under a strict system of oversight and accountability".

Troublemaker looks forward to the DfE hounding Wakefield City Academies Trust to get the schools their money back.

TORY MP Tim Loughton revealed he spends an hour in the bath every morning.

The news came as it emerged he claimed £662 for water bills over the past two years. The MP had a reasoned argument in his defence.

He pointed out, "One of the greatest causes of stress in the world was the invention of the shower."

Tim Loughton takes a dip

A number of newspapers' front page last week was the following unconfirmed story.

Apparently a 33-year-old man called Harry took his 36-year-old girlfriend Meghan round to his 91-year-old granny's house for a cup of tea.

Or then again he might not have.

Deporting the homeless to keep the figures down

THE NUMBER of people sleeping rough in London has dropped for the first time in a decade. Not because of more housing but because the government are deporting the homeless.

About 1,000 Romanians and Polish people have been deported in the past year, with about 200 going voluntarily and the rest removed by Home Office immigration enforcement officers.

The scheme could be halted because of a judicial review to decide whether the Home Office is correct. It says that rough sleepers who cannot support themselves lose their rights to freedom of

A police raid on homeless people

movement as EU citizens. Meanwhile the number of British born rough sleepers is at a record high.

Across England the number people sleeping rough on one night in autumn 2016 also rose by 16 percent to 4,134 compared with 2015.

Pepper sprayed—but at least the bars are British

PRISONERS WILL be targeted with pepper spray. Four prisons will try out spray, known as Pava, which is more potent than CS gas.

Its use in the US has been linked to the deaths of 26 people in custody, according to a study by the American Civil Liberties Union group.

Frances Crook of the Howard League for Penal Reform, condemned the trial. "The Ministry of Justice should be preventing disorder and violence, not

adding to it," she said. Staff at HMP Wealstun in West Yorkshire, HMP Risley in Cheshire, HMP Preston and HMP Hull are being trained in using the spray.

The Tories have found for £1 million for the introduction of new "police-style" handcuffs and restraints.

IN A victory to make you proud Justice Secretary David Lidington has found 2,500 tons of steel to build Berwyn prison, all of it British.

David Lidington

Sister helps with planning

CABINET OFFICE Minister Caroline Noakes has previously criticised property developers for manipulating planning laws.

But a bid to revamp her £1 million family house on the edge of the New Forest was submitted in the name of her sister, who was identified as the owner.

Yet Land Registry documents show Romsey and Southampton North MP Noakes is the sole owner of the property.

The application was waved through—but submitting a false certificate of ownership in a planning application is an offence carrying a potential fine of up to £5,000.

The New Forest National Park authority said it would "not be in the public interest to spend money on a prosecution".

FIGURE IT OUT

4,000,000

the number of people who still have to pay 55p a minute to call a help line. Tax credits are run by HMRC and are excluded from the Tories' promises to make the calls to helplines free.

'Kill 'em all'—says minister

TORIES OFTEN get excited at the prospect of killing people.

So International Development Minister Rory Stewart opined, "These people are a serious danger to us, and the only way of dealing with them will be, in almost every case, to kill them."

Stewart was backing the US envoy to the coalition fighting Isis, Brett McGurk, who said his mission since the fall of Raqqa was to ensure every foreign Isis fighter in Syria died there.

According to the spooks of the 850 British people who have travelled to Syria since 2011, 120 were killed fighting for groups such as Isis.

Around 350 have returned home, with the same number still there.

So Stewart is going to be a busy man.

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School cuts campaigners descend on parliament

by SADIE ROBINSON

PARENTS, CHILDREN, teachers and campaigners gathered in central London for a mass lobby of parliament on Tuesday. Tory funding cuts will see 88 percent of schools lose money in real terms.

Students Lucy, Sophie and Jess told Socialist Worker about the impact that cuts have already had in Haringey, north London.

"Our teachers are under a lot of stress," said Lucy. "They sometimes break down in lessons and we don't have the materials we need."

Sophie said, "It's really important to have things like art and music, otherwise some students will just switch off."

"But for my GCSE music there was just one teacher for the whole school."

Jess agreed. "I spoke to one of my old teachers who said they aren't teaching art in years 7, 8 and 9 anymore," she said. "That means no one will take it at GCSE."

Specialists

Storm, a parent, described how cuts are wrecking education. "Children are being taught by teachers who aren't specialists in the subjects," she said.

And Natasha from south London said cuts have affected her two children, who have extra needs. "They have a disorder that means they develop tumours," she told Socialist Worker.

"Tumours in the shoulder means they can't grip a pencil. There was a really good TA but we've just lost the TA for this class."

Teachers said conditions in schools have become much worse. NEU union member Ekaterina from Cheltenham told Socialist Worker, "The budget is very tight. It has direct implications on resources and our pay."

Equal pay



PICTURE: GLASGOW CITY UNION

UP TO 200 Unison and GMB union members protested over Single Status Agreement equal pay claims outside Glasgow City Chambers on Monday.

They want the Scottish

National Party-run council to honour its election promise to settle the decade-long dispute that began when Labour controlled the authority.

It has sought permission to

appeal an earlier court ruling that said they had to pay up.

Many of the protesters wore fake moustaches to highlight that it is mostly women workers who are waiting to win equal pay.

Shrewsbury teacher Charles added, "I've been working in state education for 35 years and it's the worst it's ever been."

"They should raise taxes to fund education—the rich are getting richer. But action by school workers—and more campaigning by parents—can defend school funding."

Ekaterina was optimistic that "if everybody's involved and active, they will have to listen to us".

NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney told the rally, "This campaign isn't going away."

Elections

"There is a set of big local elections in May next year. We want to ask everyone who stands to be a councillor where they stand on school cuts."

Labour shadow education secretary Angela Rayner told the rally, "We've had enough of tinkering round

the edges." She said that a Labour government would ensure anyone can return to education at any time "free at the point of need".

It's good that Labour is making promises to better fund education. But we can't simply wait for a Labour government to solve the education crisis.

Children are losing out now—and it will take sustained action from ordinary people to turn that around.

Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working-class rhetoric of the mainstream press.

We publish stories of successful strikes, protests and pickets that beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

The importance of Socialist Worker cannot be underestimated. It is a constant reminder of our struggles and successes.

The paper has played a leading role in challenging the rise of racism in all forms,

especially Islamophobia.

When I and other Stand Up to Racism activists disrupted the UKIP press launch, the paper supported us, it's something I will never forget.

Naima Omar
SUTR activist



To donate go to www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7840 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW



NHS staff slam new racist plan

>>continued from page 1
health workers alike—and it will deter many migrants from seeking care that they need.

To divert anger over the NHS crisis the Tories are pushing the lie that "health tourism" by migrants is draining resources.

But there's no evidence for the government's claim that such "health tourism" costs £500 million a year. And even this is a tiny proportion of the NHS budget.

NHS understaffing will make it hard to enforce the controls consistently. And hospitals will have some leeway.

That leaves more room for racist discrimination. Someone who appears to be from an immigrant background will be more likely to face checks.

But it also creates a space for health workers to resist the checks.

Chrissie said, "We passed a motion in our union branch and region condemning this policy—and committing us to defend any member of staff who refuses to do it."

But, she added, "What's happening around this in unions is coming from the bottom. We need the national unions to speak out in defence of people who need care wherever they come from."

MARCH AGAINST DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Saturday 28 October, 12 noon @ Trafalgar Square

Organised by the United Families & Friends Campaign (UFFC)

Humiliated May faces deepening Tory crisis

Rows rumble on in the Tory party, but it will take struggle to get them out, writes Tomáš Tengely-Evans

THERESA MAY faces further humiliation at the hands of the European Union (EU)—and her own backbenchers. And it's not just Brexit that's testing the Tories.

Pressure mounted on May last Sunday to stop the rollout of the Universal Credit (UC) benefit. UC, which combines six benefits into one, has plunged people into poverty and homelessness.

A Labour parliamentary motion against the UC rollout was passed in parliament last Wednesday—although it has no immediate effect. Knowing they had no hope of defeating it, the Tory leadership ordered its MPs to boycott the motion to hide the scale of backbench rebellion.

Tory MP Heidi Allen is heading up backbenchers who are now calling on May to reduce the wait for the Universal Credit (UC) benefit from six to four weeks.

This group of hypocrite MPs are the same Tories who supported seven years of austerity and welfare reforms. They are just looking out for their own interests.

As the Financial Times newspaper said, “To insist on expansion in its present form is needless and politically dangerous.”

“If Mrs May ignored the warnings of her own MPs she could pay a heavy political price.”

Tormented

Meanwhile the pressures of Brexit grind on. One report of May’s recent dinner meeting in Brussels claimed she was “begging for help” and appeared “tormented”, “despondent and discouraged”.

The EU is demanding that the British government pays billions to leave—and isn’t offering talks on future trade agreements until this is agreed.

Tory international trade secretary Liam Fox said Britain was not bluffing on retaliating with a “no deal Brexit”.

But other sections of the Tory party, such as chancellor Philip

BACK STORY

The Tories are at war with each other over Brexit and austerity

- Labour won a motion against the rollout of Universal Credit last week in parliament
- Some backbench Tories also oppose the rollout—but because they fear the anger it will cause
- Theresa May continues to come under pressure over Brexit and the Tories are divided over it
- But there’s no obvious unifying replacement for May—and the Tories won’t fall automatically

Hammond, know that British capital would not accept “no deal”.

The City of London and big business want a deal that delivers a system as close as possible to the EU’s neoliberal single market.

Cabinet ministers are jostling for position ahead of the 22 November budget, hoping to distance themselves from May’s unpopularity and her “no deal Brexit”.

So cabinet minister Sajid Javid said the government could borrow money to build housing in what Hammond promised would be a “revolutionary” budget.

And some Tory MPs are looking for cross-party cooperation with Labour over Brexit (see right).

Senior Tories are describing Theresa May’s government as “weak and stable”, a mockery of her general election slogan “strong and stable”. But there is no obvious unifying replacement to May—or one that wants to take her place at the Brexit negotiating table.

Labour Lord Beecham said UC was “becoming the poll tax of our time”. The poll tax was beaten by mass resistance, not parliamentary manoeuvres. That’s what we need now to force the Tories out.

On other pages...

We will build mass movement against racism >>Pages 10&11



PICTURE: NUMBER 10/Flickr

LABOUR

Starmer says he will work with Tories to win right wing changes over Brexit

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR WILL collaborate with Tory MPs in parliament over legislation about leaving the European Union (EU), shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer has said.

Writing for the Sunday Times newspaper, Starmer said Labour would work with the Tories to secure six changes to the EU withdrawal bill.

These involve giving MPs power to effectively veto leaving the EU and keeping Britain in the pro-business single market.

Yet disgracefully they do not include defending freedom of movement for European migrants or protecting the rights of EU nationals living in Britain.

Labour has to show it won’t block Brexit after the largely anti-establishment vote to leave the EU. But it also faces pressure to defend the EU and the single market.

Some Labour supporters are rightly horrified at the Tories’ racist and right wing vision for Brexit. But right wing EU supporters also want Labour to show it can protect pro-business austerity and privatisation.

Corbyn met EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier that same day and said Labour would approach negotiations “in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect”.

JEREMY CORBYN previously met Michel Barnier in July

will increase as Labour appears more likely to be elected to office.

At a meeting of European Labour-type parties in Brussels last Thursday Jeremy Corbyn called for “radical alternatives” to austerity.

Neoliberalism

But he also said Labour wanted Britain to retain access to the single market—a key plank of neoliberalism that enforces austerity and privatisation.

Such compromises put Labour in a weaker position to challenge austerity and defend migrants if elected to government.

The alternative is to unite Labour’s Leave and Remain-backing supporters around an anti-racist, anti-austerity vision of Brexit.

ANTI-FASCISM

English Defence League is shamed in Peterborough

by GARETH HILL

MORE than 100 anti-fascists protested against the English Defence League (EDL) as it tried to march through Peterborough last Saturday.

The counter-protest was organised by Peterborough Trades Union Council and supported by Unite Against Fascism (UAF).

The EDL mustered around 20 people.

Peterborough MP Fiona Onasanya led chants as the EDL marched past.

Young Muslims from local mosques cooked food and bought drinks for the demonstrators. Ron Graves, president of Peterborough Trades Union Council, stressed the role trade unions and workers



Part of the anti-Nazi protest

PICTURE: RICHARD ROSE

play in opposing racism and fascism.

Outside Peterborough Magistrate's Court the EDL were surrounded and heckled by residents, shoppers and anti-fascists.

They were then led off by police to the cheers and waves of Peterborough locals.

Richard Rose from UAF said, "There has been a worrying rise in racist attacks.

"However there is also a new vibrant anti-racist movement which we need to mobilise and ensure the EDL and their ilk are sent into the dustbin of history."

For a longer version go to socialistworker.co.uk/art/45550/A

The report by the International Organisation for Migration released last month shows that death rates for migrants crossing the Mediterranean have almost doubled since September last year.

And, if people make it to Britain past the border guards, they can expect even more brutality.

A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services released on Tuesday slams the cops for failing to investigate "modern day slavery".

The report lifts a lid on the racism that courses through the police force.

Cops told inspectors they thought the public "don't want to know about it and only see it as an issue if it affects them".

The police are to blame, and

Protests planned at Tommy Robinson's 'book launches'

ANTI-NAZIS are preparing to protest against English Defence League (EDL) founder Tommy Robinson.

Robinson plans to hold a "book launch" in Greater Manchester on Friday 3 November and in Gateshead on 4 November.

Before founding the EDL he was a member of the Nazi British National Party.

He claims his

(UAF) has called a protest and launched a unity statement.

Activists in Gateshead also plan to protest against Robinson.

UAF is asking the venues to cancel Robinson's booking.

Protest 3 November, The Bowlers Exhibition Centre, Trafford Park M17 1SN.

Go to Newcastle Unites on Facebook for details of the Gateshead protest

Tommy Robinson

FLA leader backs Nazi demo

A RUMP of Nazis marched against Muslims in Whitechapel, east London, last Saturday.

The march was made up of around 60 open Nazis from the National Front (NF) and hooligan firm Chelsea Headhunters.

It opposed "Islamic grooming", playing to the Islamophobic stereotype that Muslims are to blame for child abuse. Stand Up To

Racism (SUTR) supporters in Tower Hamlets showed solidarity with the East London Mosque and Islamic Centre on Whitechapel Road.

Football Lads Alliance (FLA) founder John Meighan has claimed to be against "all extremism".

But he backed the Nazi march, posting in the FLA's internal Facebook group, "Good luck to those marching tomorrow in London against terror."

This was subsequently deleted.

Meighan tried to access the end of the SUTR national conference in central London last Saturday.

When questioned about supporting the Nazi march he retorted, "I'll support anyone protesting against Islamic extremism".

Anti-racists have to be vigilant of the threat of the right—and take on the wider racism that feeds it.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

BORDER CONTROLS MEAN SLAVERY AND DEATH

TUESDAY MARKED one year since the demolition of the "jungle" refugee camp by cops in Calais. And one year on the refugee crisis is as bad as ever.

As Socialist Worker showed last week, Britain's border fence in Calais means desperate people are locked out. It is part of the European Union and Britain's cruel regime against migrants.

A report by the International Organisation for Migration released last month shows that death rates for migrants crossing the Mediterranean have almost doubled since September last year.

And, if people make it to Britain past the border guards, they can expect even more brutality.

A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services released on Tuesday slams the cops for failing to investigate "modern day slavery".

The report lifts a lid on the racism that courses through the police force.

Cops told inspectors they thought the public "don't want to know about it and only see it as an issue if it affects them".

The police are to blame, and

the systemic nature of racism means they get away with it. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority, set up by New Labour, investigates "modern day slavery".

It is staffed largely by former cops. It works with the UK Border Agency and often deports people who come forward with information—that's why few people do.

Hypocritical politicians often say they want to "get tough" on "modern day slavery".

Their solution rests on increasing immigration controls.

But that does not mean there will be less immigration. It just forces people to take more dangerous routes and rely on

people smugglers, which increases the likelihood of being forced into slavery.

If politicians were sincere about eradicating the problem, they would grant deportation amnesties to people who come forward with information.

Last week's Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) conference showed there's a mood to organise and fight back against all manifestations of racism (see pages 10&11).

Everyone should build on the momentum generated by the SUTR conference.

There has never been a more important time to be involved in an international fight against racism.

Fighting against Islamophobia, antisemitism and arguing for an end to immigration controls are critical tasks for socialists.

We need to continue fighting the Tories and others who deny refugees a right to safety.

At the conference there was a sense of urgency that can be taken back to workplaces and colleges across Britain.

We need to build a movement that can undermine the racism the system rests on.

ABORTION IS A RIGHT

Poorer women in Northern Ireland who come to England to have an abortion will now be able to claim money for travel and accommodation.

Equalities minister Justine Greening announced the shift on Monday, following campaigning by pro-choice groups.

Abortion is only legal in Northern Ireland if a woman's life is at risk or if there is a serious or permanent risk to her physical or mental health. Many women

are forced to travel to access abortion services, continue with unwanted pregnancies or try to obtain abortion illegally.

The government was forced to allow women from Northern Ireland to access abortion services for free on the NHS earlier this year. Together with this week's announcement the changes will make a real difference to many women's lives.

But they only came about because ordinary people organised to demand them—and

should encourage us to fight for more. Greening's announcement means that women who earn less than £15,276 a year will be able to claim for travel and accommodation costs. But access to abortion services shouldn't be rationed or means tested.

And 50 years on from the 1967 Abortion Act, it must be extended to Northern Ireland. Every woman should have the right to choose.

Turn to page 17 for more on the 1967 Abortion Act

Marxism in Scotland 2017

CRISIS, CLASS AND THE LEFT

A day of debate and discussion hosted by the Socialist Workers Party

Saturday 28 October

Renfield St Stephens Centre, Glasgow G2 4JP

● From 10:30am ● £10 waged, £5 unwaged ● book at tinyurl.com/EMiS2017

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS

Catalan struggle can damage smug bosses

"WHEN THE first reports of serious disorders in Catalonia were reaching Madrid, the English ambassador wrote home that he saw 'nothing in the business that is hard to settle'."

No, not October 2017 but May 1640. The quotation comes from J H Elliott's *The Revolt of the Catalans*—the story of a rebellion so great that it took nearly 20 years of warfare to restore Spanish rule over Catalonia.

War isn't imminent today in Catalonia. But the Spanish ambassador to Britain said last Sunday that if the Catalan government resisted prime minister Mariano Rajoy's decision to remove them they would become "rebels".

A historical perspective casts a different light on Rajoy's pledge that, "We are going to work so that all Catalans can feel united and participate in a common project in Europe and the world that has been known for centuries as Spain."

The truth is that Spain "for centuries" was an imperial state based on the kingdom of Castile ruling over subordinate populations in the Americas and the Iberian peninsula itself.

Portugal also rebelled against Spanish rule in 1640, in its case successfully. Catalonia was reconciled to restored rule from Madrid by the preservation of its traditional autonomy. This was swept away when the present Bourbon dynasty took over at the beginning of the 18th century.

When the last remnants of Spain's overseas empire were seized by the United States at the end of the 19th century, the monarchy went into crisis. Spain's subject nations asserted themselves. In October 1934 Lluis Companys, the Catalan president, proclaimed the independence of Catalonia. He was sentenced to thirty years in prison and later executed under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco after the right won the civil war of 1936-9.

Warned

This isn't just ancient history. A couple of weeks ago the spokesperson for the ruling Popular Party (PP) warned the current Catalan president, Carles Puigdemont, that he might suffer Companys' fate. The PP is the political heir of Franco's regime. Like the old tyrant—and the new Bourbon king Felipe VI—it defends the old tradition of Castilian centralism.

Spain is one of a number of states that are the remnants of old multinational empires and now masquerade as nation states. Britain is the most important other example in western Europe. The same is true, in otherwise different conditions, of both Russia and China.

The economic crisis since 2007-8 has widened the fault-lines in both the British and Spanish states. The movements for independence in both Scotland and Catalonia have been fed by the experience of austerity imposed from respectively London and Madrid by right wing governments.

How these governments responded to the movements differed though. Tory prime minister David Cameron conceded a referendum on Scottish independence, which he won—though more narrowly than he had expected—in September 2014.

But he could rely on the buffer offered by the Labour Party. Labour in effect sacrificed itself in Scotland to save the Union. The Scottish National Party scooped up many of its traditional working class voters. Meanwhile the Tories were able to re-establish themselves as the most consistent defenders of the Union. The Corbyn effect is now beginning to make itself felt in Scotland too, however.

Although opinion polls tend to suggest that independence doesn't have majority support in Catalonia, Rajoy refused to gamble on winning a referendum. So the Catalan independence movement defied him and held one anyway.

Rajoy's refusal to negotiate seriously indicates the ideological strength of Castilian centralism—and no doubt of good old Francoism—in the PP.

His hard line has been backed by the likes of German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Emmanuel Macron. The Guardian smugly concluded its analysis, "Given that very few separatists are interested in leaving the EU, that is a devastating blow."

But if growing repression from Madrid feeds greater popular defiance and mass mobilisation in Catalonia, it may be the European Union—and the heirs of Franco it is buttressing up—who end up paying the largest price.

Turn to page 20 for more on Catalonia

Stop the pensions robbery—keep up pressure in the post

Workers are defiant despite Royal Mail bosses' legal challenges to strikes, reports Nick Clark

ROYAL MAIL'S top boss has suggested that the company could retreat over attacks on workers' pay, pensions and conditions.

But the leaders of the postal workers' CWU union have rightly said there could still be strikes if they don't get an acceptable agreement.

Royal Mail chief executive Moya Greene said bosses could move their position to get an agreement, CWU deputy general secretary Terry Pullinger revealed last week.

Speaking to a national gathering of CWU union reps last Thursday, Pullinger said Greene told him during a five-hour meeting that she wanted a deal. But bosses have so far shown no sign of abandoning a major assault on postal workers.

They're trying to push through changes to pensions that could see some workers lose thousands of pounds.

Slash

They also want to slash pay and introduce a new delivery model that could pave the way for huge cuts and a part time, casual workforce.

Pullinger told a rally that same day, "If there are no significant moves then this will be a fight to the end. This is being wrecked, this industry, over a long period. 1,000 cuts—a slow death to our



ON TUESDAY'S protest in central London (above). Royal Mail boss Moya Greene (left)

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



service. Believe me, we will be successful and we will make history."

It came after Royal Mail bosses won a court injunction to stop postal workers from striking.

Workers had voted to strike by a massive 89 percent on a 73 percent turnout—and had been set to strike for 48 hours last week.

Bosses argued in court that an agreement signed by CWU leaders in 2013 stopped the union from calling national strikes without going through five weeks of external mediation.

Union activists told Socialist Worker that some postal workers wondered

why union leaders hadn't recognised the problem in the agreement.

But a march by hundreds of CWU members in central London last week showed workers are still angry—and still ready to strike.

Steve Clarke from CWU's Eastern No 5 branch told Socialist Worker that the court ruling had made union members even angrier and that Royal Mail "have got a fight on their hands".

And John Hunt from the Essex Amal branch said, "They will not beat us. It's a setback, but all it's done is postpone this dispute. This dispute is very much on unless we get an agreement."

How to keep the dispute on track

THE MEDIATION means strikes could be delayed for at least another six weeks.

That means union activists have to work hard to keep the momentum behind the dispute going.

There should be more gate meetings at every Royal Mail workplace like the ones the union used to win the vote for strikes.

Union

leaders can't let bosses use the mediation to delay the strikes any further.

A strike in December could hit bosses hard.

And any deal must:

- **Guarantee a pension scheme for all workers in the industry, not just those who've worked there the longest.**

- **Give workers an above-inflation pay rise not linked to productivity deals.**

- **Guarantee that workers aren't forced to change their hours to fit in with Royal Mail's profit drive.**

- **Give workers a shorter working week—without loss of pay.**



Workers outside court earlier this month



Watch online

● **Postal workers marched in central London on Thursday, a week after Royal Mail bosses went to the courts to stop them from striking.**

● **Watch footage of their protest at bit.ly/2goznTY**

Most Grenfell survivors still wait for new homes

by ALISTAIR FARROW

ONLY TEN out of 203 Grenfell Tower households have found permanent housing. Most are still waiting to be rehoused four months after the fire.

That's despite council promises to find alternative housing for people.

The broken promises made to survivors are stacking up.

A spokesperson for the Department for Communities and Local Government said last Thursday that councils would not get any help to force landlords to get rid of cladding.

The department does not view it as a "new burden" for councils and so will not give them money to take private landlords who fail to cooperate to court.

Contempt

The Tories are continuing to treat survivors and anyone else who lives in social housing with contempt.

Grenfell Tower was managed by the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO).

The council took back all its housing stock from KCTMO last month.

At a meeting on Tuesday the council proposed that tenants vote to effectively disband the KCTMO.

A legal challenge was submitted raising concerns that not every resident of the KCTMO was to have a vote on the decision.

It also pointed out that "the TMO would cease to exist as an organisation and therefore may not be subject to prosecution for corporate manslaughter". Under pressure, KCTMO advised a vote for the postponement of the decision.

Joe Delaney, an evacuated

GRENFELL TOWER is being covered up before survivors are rehoused

resident from the Lancaster West estate, was in the meeting. He told Socialist Worker, "Following intense public pressure KCTMO proposed the motion tonight to adjourn the meeting and it was overwhelmingly voted in favour of."

Joe said the KCTMO promised to "better consult residents in the future on such matters and also that residents will have a complete and total hand as to how any future housing entity or structure is comprised."

The vote will be adjourned

for longer than the standard 21 days.

The Home Office published its guidance on the treatment of undocumented migrant survivors of the fire last Friday.

People will have to re-apply once a year for five years before they will be eligible for permanent residence.

That's a climbdown from the Tories' initial policy of a one year amnesty for undocumented migrants and is a partial victory.

But excluded from the policy is "any person for whom there are

concerns about criminality, character or associations, including extremist behaviour".

There is no definition of what could constitute "extremist behaviour".

The Tories are trying to give with one hand and claw back with the other. A strong political and legal campaign can wring victories from them.

Grenfell Tower Silent Walk
Tue 14 November, 6.30pm, Notting Hill Methodist Church, W1 4AH.
More details at bit.ly/2hYYixX

Tower blocks under threat

A GIANT redevelopment project in Rochdale, Greater Manchester, threatens to wreck hundreds of lives.

Four of the Seven Sisters tower blocks on the College Bank estate are under threat of demolition.

Neil Emmott, Rochdale's lead councillor for housing, said the plan "smacks of social cleansing".

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) has claimed that 120 townhouses will be built on the demolition site—and the remaining three would get facelifts.

Over 760 flats would be affected by the proposals—528 would be demolished—

and around 1,000 people would have to move while the work took place.

RBH said the proposals "could result in a net increase of 500 homes", but offered no explanation or evidence for the claim.

It has also used the deprivation of the area as justification for the redevelopment.

Unemployment there is four times the national average. But the redevelopment won't change that.

It is more likely to compound problems as people's support networks, built up over decades, could be ripped apart if the proposals go through.

Housing is a 'safe place' for money

PROPERTY developers, politicians and investors descended on Kensington Olympia in west London to carve up the housing market last week.

They debated the way forward at the Mipim property fair. Grenfell Tower wasn't mentioned in any of the sessions Socialist Worker went to.

Sir Edward Lister from the Department for International Trade was candid about his vision. "We need 100,000 more homes a year," he said at an investors' breakfast. "We

Sir Edward Lister

want numbers. That's all we're interested in."

He went on to outline how the state helps the rich do business. "We are still a very safe place to come and put your money," he said. "There's a lot of cash coming in from those sources."

Lister introduced Duncan Sutherland from Sigma Capital PLC as an example of how his department negotiates deals on behalf of the rich and powerful.

Sutherland described how Sigma attracted investment from Kuwait which "gave us the ability to build a substantial amount of houses for private rent, and no one else was doing it."

Other speakers were more guarded with their language.

Jules Pipe, London's deputy mayor for planning and regeneration, agreed with the bosses. "For too long mixed use has been a multi-storey tower block on top of a shop," he said.

"We see it for more as what is being described here."

Behind the buzzwords is a brutal vision—one of social cleansing and the privatisation of public space.

The London mayor's office is on the side of the most notorious companies in the housing industry.

Developers and investors, encouraged by the government, are eyeing up people's homes as investment opportunities.

Labour councils must be pressured to stand against them. Nothing good will come of trying to outsmart the bosses at their own game—they've rigged the deck.

HOMES FOR ALL

HOUSING SUMMIT

Saturday 25 November

11am-5pm

Hamilton House, London WC1H 9BD

Facebook: Axe the Housing Act – secure homes for all Email: info@axethehousingact.org.uk

Twitter: @AxeHousingAct

Phone: 07432 098440

Web: www.axethehousingact.org.uk

Defend Council Housing

PO Box 33319
London E2 9WW
info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

Fury as Nazi MPs enter the German parliament

Half of the Alternative for Germany party's new MPs are linked to fascist groups, says Tomáš Tengely-Evans

ANTI-RACISTS PROTESTED in Berlin on Tuesday as parliament opened and new MPs from the far right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party took their seats.

The protest followed a 12,000-strong demonstration at the Brandenburg Gate in the city on Sunday, both organised by Aufstehen gegen Rassismus (Stand up against Racism).

The AfD won 12.9 percent and 94 MPs in last month's election—the first time a far right party has had MPs in Germany since the Second World War.

Bastian Schmidt came to the protest on Sunday as part of a group of university students.

"I'm here to call on parliamentary parties to protest in parliament against the AfD," he told the Local Germany news website.

"But above all the people who are here wherever they are—in schools, universities or work—must fight against racism."

Teacher Annette Saidler added, "We can't do anything other than demonstrate to say there are still many people who didn't vote for the AfD."

Extreme

The AfD brings together nationalists, racists and fascists, organised around Islamophobia and racism towards migrants. The most extreme elements have gained influence within the party.

One of its most prominent spokespersons, Björn Höcke, has called the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin "shameful". He has called for Germans to be more "positive" about Nazi history.

Anette Schultner, formerly the leader of the Christians in the AfD group, resigned last week because of the fascists' growing influence.

"I believe there is no longer any chance of making the AfD a pragmatic, bourgeois-conservative people's party," she told the *Der Tagesspiegel* newspaper.

"Out of the regional AfD parties there is a maximum of a third where

BACK STORY

German federal elections last month saw a shift to the right

- The far right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won its first federal seats—94 of them
- Chancellor Angela Merkel's right wing bloc of the CDU and CSU parties lost 64 seats
- Her former coalition partners, the Labour-type Social Democratic Party, lost 40
- The CDU/CSU remains the largest group, but Merkel has struggled to form a new coalition

there's still a chance of putting up majorities against Höcke.

"Many do not dare to position themselves against Höcke and his allies. Anyone who wants to become something in the AfD would not want to block them."

Cornelia Kerth is part of the Union of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN) organisation.

"Out of the 94 MPs at least half are Nazis or have links to the Nazi scene like the Identitarian Movement," she explained. "They will have around 400 people working for them [in parliament]."

"They will be mainly recruited from far right organisations and the AfD youth wing, which is to the right of the main organisation."

The process that's taking place within the AfD shows that it's possible for Nazis to grow within right wing parties that they didn't initially dominate.

The AfD can be repelled—but it will take mass action and taking on the Islamophobia and racism that's fuelled its rise.

There's also a need to provide positive, left wing answers to the social problems the AfD offers fake solutions for.



On other pages...

Catalan crisis deepens as Spanish state clamps down >>Page 20



"AGAINST RACISM in parliament"—protesters in Berlin on Sunday

UNITED STATES

Trump's Muslim ban is foiled again

by ALISTAIR FARROW

PROTESTERS IN the US celebrated a victory as injunctions delayed the implementation of president Donald Trump's third travel ban on Wednesday of last week.

The ruling from Judge Derrick K Watson in Hawaii blocked the ban on people entering the US from seven Muslim-majority countries.

It allowed the bans against people coming from Venezuela and North Korea to stand, however.

Zahra Biloo is executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

in San Francisco and the Bay Area. She argued that the two countries were added "to balance out allegations that this is a Muslim ban".

The legal challenges came after up to 1,000 people marched in Los Angeles against the ban and hundreds marched in Washington, DC.

Mirvette Judeh, vice-chair of the African American Civic Council, was on the Los Angeles demonstration.

"If you don't stand up anyone could be next," she told Socialist

Worker. "This is a very important moment.

"This is not just a stand against the travel ban, it's a stand for all our freedoms. Every day he's coming up with new policies to attack us."

Meanwhile in Boston, Massachusetts, hundreds of students walked out of class to protest against racist incidents on campus.

These came after right wingers held a "Boston Free Speech Rally" in August which was met by tens of thousands of counter-protesters.



A demonstrator in Washington, DC

International Socialism 156

WHAT'S LEFT OF OCTOBER?

Alex Callinicos
on the Russian Revolution

Cathy Porter
on Maxim Gorky

Eileen Short
on the Grenfell Tower fire

Mark L Thomas
on the Corbyn surge

Out now, £5. order your copy at isj.org.uk or on 0207 840 5640



Shame on Frankfurt book fair

I WORK for a London-based book distributor and have been attending the Frankfurt Book Fair as an exhibitor for the last 17 years.

I was at my stand at the 2017 fair when I discovered that the organisers had given a platform to the far right publisher Antaios.

They had facilitated a reading by Bjorn Hocke—a leading member of the far right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

Hocke is notorious for arguing that Germany should be “more positive” about its Nazi past.

So I am deeply grateful to those decent people who braved heavy police protection of Hocke to demand “Nazis Out”.

Another session with two members of the Islamophobic Identitarian Movement was cancelled because of anti-fascist protesters.

The organisers of the fair defended giving a platform to the far right on the grounds they were promoting dialogue.

What sort of dialogue do they believe can be undertaken with Nazis?

Do they think Holocaust denial is a legitimate position to hold?

It is a disgrace that the Frankfurt Book Fair has helped normalise Nazi politics.

I would like to remind the organisers of the Frankfurt Book Fair that Nazis burn books—then they burn people.

Sasha Simic
East London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Where are my NHS records?

IT IS not only a scandal that we were given tainted blood and not told when they found out (Socialist Worker, 18 October).

The real scandal is that they got rid of all records. I have no records of my heart operation or blood transfusion in the 1970s.

I was told they were destroyed under the 25 year rule.

The rule does not exist and most records are kept on microfilm. So if your records go missing start asking questions.

Tracey Davies
South London

Young Marx—a must see

I WANT to urge people to try to see the new play Young Marx at the Bridge Theatre in London.

It's a gritty comedy which puts the fight against exploitation and oppression centre stage.

Through Karl Marx's family life in London, it addresses so many topics relevant to today.

They range from the oppression of women to whether violence is necessary for a revolution.

Terry McGrath
North London

Crackdown on anti-frackers

LAWS USED against Ricky Tomlinson and the other Shrewsbury pickets in 1972 are similar to those used against anti-fracking protesters at the Preston New Road site today.

Since the partially successful Balcombe protests and camp, the Tory government has become even more pro-fracking. And the police are acting as a private force for the fracking companies.

Anna Potrykus
By email

Blade Runner reflects misogyny in Hollywood

BLADE RUNNER 2049 (Reviews, 11 October) is a science fiction film that appears to tackle whether replicants—androids built as slaves—can have agency and consciousness.

But to fully understand this film, we have to look beyond the superficial.

It is set in a dystopian future where corporate rule has destroyed the environment and created a vastly unequal society.

On one level the film can be read as a comment on the excesses of capitalism.

However, I'd argue that Blade Runner 2049 tells us more about Hollywood and attitudes in our society than the possibilities of artificial intelligence making a revolution.

It is a deeply sexist film in how it depicts women as objects throughout.

Place this film in context of Hollywood mired in allegations of sexual assault and you can understand how it can portray women in the way that it does.

Jon Hughes
Address provided

South African miners' leader murdered

SOUTH AFRICAN mine-worker Tholakele Dlunga was murdered on Tuesday night of last week.

Tholakele featured in the Marikana massacre documentary Miners Shot Down.

He was a member of the Amcu union and a strike leader in the 2012 and 2014 mineworkers' strikes.

His murder is the latest in a string of murders of union stewards in South Africa's mines in the last two months.

This is part of an ongoing campaign to



Tholakele Dlunga

silence and eliminate radical workers in the area.

Mineworkers are not the only ones to experience this.

Communities in Durban and a proposed coastal

mining area also face violence and death.

The working class community of Marikana has lost dozens of workers since 2012 to bloodshed and violence.

This has come about as a result of the actions of the government-aligned trade union in the area.

Tragically the leaders of the unions not aligned to government, whose stewards are being targeted, are not providing leadership to end the spiral of violence.

Ashley Fataar
South Africa

Corbyn is not one man army

JEREMY CORBYN isn't a one man army—we need grassroots struggle (Socialist Worker, 18 October).

It starts at school, the work place or the street leafleting.

Breaking through state propaganda by social media is another way.

Cahit Cetinkaya
On Facebook

WE WILL BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO STOP RACISM

As world leaders ramp up racism against Muslims and migrants, hundreds of anti-racists met in London last week to discuss building the resistance

THE STAND Up To Racism (SUTR) conference in central London last Saturday was a key event for all those wanting to build a mass movement.

There was a feeling of urgency—and a desire for unity.

The 1,300-strong conference resolved to up the fight.

Speaking at the final plenary, Birmingham anti-racist activist Salma Yaqoob said, "It's important like minded people get together, and strengthen and invigorate each other.

"After the marches earlier this year Trump was too intimidated to come. We'll be ready whenever they try and sneak him in."

The conference took place against the backdrop of Donald Trump and Theresa May ramping up racism against migrants and Muslims.

Threat

There is also a renewed threat from the far right across Europe.

Kevin Courtney, NEU education union joint general secretary, said, "It's everyone's obligation to be part of the movement—we can end racism."

The conference brought together activists from across Britain who've been organising against racism.

And many spoke of the need to build an anti-racist movement that could stop a state visit from Trump.

The need for international solidarity was a key theme of the conference. Greek anti-fascist Petros Constantinou said the rise of the racist right meant the anti-racist movement had to be international.

Some people came in delegations

Maryam student in London

It's heartwarming being here. When you're a minority you're used to being the one to stand up and say something in response to racism—but that's really draining.

Today has been great because people are here to organise. It's been about practical steps and you can see how we could change society.

Black leadership matters and working together in unity matters. Corbyn is our best hope at the moment—he's not perfect but he's the best chance we've got.



Nizar Khan charity worker

Racism is increasingly ignored. It's important that Stand Up To Racism has space to grow.

I want people to be activists. I don't just want them to click the sad face on Facebook.

The government knows what's going on with the Rohingya Muslims and allows it to happen.

When Muslims are on the receiving end the government turns a blind eye.

We've got to actually solve the refugee crisis, not just keep on sustaining them through aid.



Prarthana Krishnan student in Bristol

I was on a Stand Up To Racism stall when someone came up to me and said, "What are you?"

I didn't respond and she started saying, "You're the people who are causing all the problems in this country."

She stopped when she realised I'm not Muslim but it made me realise what Islamophobia can feel like.

It's more intense than any other form of racism I have experienced.

We're going to have panel discussions with societies during Islamophobia Awareness month.



Olfa Leicester activist

I lived in Greece for eight years and I've seen what racism was like there.

When I moved to Britain I didn't experience racism as much.

But that began to change in 2013.

I've seen gestures against Asian people on the bus, racist things are said in the street.

But we can't take it any more, we've got to make sure the good people stay united.

They are very good at keeping us divided and we can't let them.



Amarjit Singh CWU national race advisory committee chair

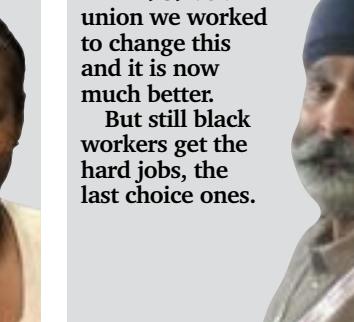
We need the national campaigns against racism and we also need the unifying power of action.

But we also need to take up issues in the workplace.

When I started in the mail centre there were just five black workers even though it was situated in a very multiracial community.

In 1989 as a union we worked to change this and it is now much better.

But still black workers get the hard jobs, the last choice ones.



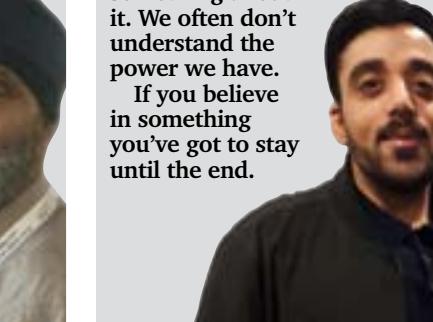
Mohammed west London

Institutional racism is endemic. If you're black and ethnic minority (Bame) you see racism on a daily basis.

Because Bame are a minority in this country there's not much awareness outside of those communities.

In the Asian community people don't know avenues for justice when the police do something. In the 1920s some women couldn't vote but great women stood up and did something about it. We often don't understand the power we have.

If you believe in something you've got to stay until the end.



Alternative for Germany's election breakthroughs.

David Albrich from Austria argued that mainstream parties, such as the Labour-type SPO, had made concessions to racism which had helped the far right grow. "The problem is that racism has penetrated deeply into mainstream parties—this needs to be opposed," he said.

Other workshops discussed the threat of the Football Lads Alliance and the need to defend migrants' rights.

Progress

Diane Abbott, shadow home secretary, told the closing plenary that a future Labour government would fight racism.

"We cannot allow the politics of hate to prevail," she said. You can't take progress for granted and there are some who want to push the progress back.

"Fighting racism will be at the heart of my work as home secretary when Jeremy Corbyn is prime minister."

The left in Britain has grown in confidence—but the threat of the right and racism has not gone away. That means we have to build a mass movement against racism that resists all the attempts to divide us.

As SUTR joint convenor Weyman Bennett said, "We need a movement that can give us strength. We need to build local Stand Up To Racism groups.

"When the right is on the march across the world, we need to stand up and we do that by organising."



THE MAIN hall of the Stand Up To Racism conference last Saturday

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN AND SOCIALIST WORKER



WHERE NEXT

November

Help SUTR build activity during Islamophobia Awareness Month. Go to Islamophobia Awareness Month UK on Facebook

December

Winter appeal for refugees. Build solidarity and support for refugees alongside Care4Calais. You can also join the delegation going to France on Sunday 10 December. Go to Care4Calais on Facebook

January

Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27 January. Help your local SUTR group organise an event and go to Holocaust Memorial Day Trust on Facebook

February

SUTR trade union conference takes place on Saturday 3 February. Go to Stand Up To Racism on Facebook

March

SUTR national demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Cardiff will take place on Saturday 17 March, coordinated with international protests

For more go to standuptoracism.org.uk



Esa Charles

from trade union branches. And activists from the Trade Unionists 4 Calais group were collecting donations for a trip to Calais on Sunday.

The need for international solidarity was a key theme of the conference. Greek anti-fascist Petros Constantinou said the rise of the racist right meant the anti-racist movement had to be international. Usman, a health worker from east London, has been involved in a SUTR workplace group. "I've been

interested in left wing politics, but haven't been to anything like this before," he told Socialist Worker. "But I decided to come because there's a difference between sitting at home and coming here and doing something about it."

The conference saw workshops on themes including defending free movement, fighting Islamophobia and Black Lives Matter among others. Hundreds joined a workshop about how the anti-racist movement has responded to the Grenfell Tower fire. Grenfell survivor Bilal said, "We've been experiencing institutional racism for years.

"If the tower hadn't been full of minorities would they have ignored it in the same way? People from deprived areas are ignored."

Bilal described how the mainstream media has used racism in its reporting of the fire and demonised people in North Kensington. "It doesn't stop here," he said. "What counts is what happens when we leave this room today."

The loudest cheers at the conference went to speakers who called for

resisting Islamophobia and the police killings of black people. Esa Charles, father of Rashan Charles, and Janet Alder, sister of Christopher Alder, told the opening plenary that they were determined to fight for justice. Speakers from Austria and Germany told one workshop how they're resisting the far right in the wake of the Freedom Party and

Diane Abbott

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }

BRANCH MEETINGS
Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNSLEY

Socialists and the fight against racism

Thu 2 Nov, 7pm,
YMCA,
Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Socialism and women's liberation

Wed 1 Nov, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BRIGHTON

Going beyond the binary—Marxism, gender and trans politics

Thu 2 Nov, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

The Spanish civil war—how did Franco come to power?

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Genocide in Myanmar—why is it happening?

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB1 1NR

CHESTERFIELD

100 years after the Balfour Declaration—how can Palestine be free?

Thu 2 Nov, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

Catalonia, independence and resistance

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd,
CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

Does Venezuela show that socialism can't work?

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St,
CV1 3BB

DONCASTER

50 years after the Abortion Act—the fight for abortion rights today

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
The Womens Centre (Changing Lives),
5 Princes St,
DN1 3NJ

DUNDEE

Where next for the left in Scotland?

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd
DD1 1LL

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Marxism and mental health

Thu 9 Nov, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

EDINBURGH

Capitalism and the crisis in social care

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

Catalonia, independence and resistance

Thu 9 Nov, 7pm,
Exeter Community Centre,
17 St David's Hill,
EX4 3RG

GLASGOW

The bloody history of the British Empire

Thu 2 Nov, 7pm,
Avant Garde,
33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD

How can women's liberation be achieved?

Wed 1 Nov, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade,
HD1 5JP

DONCASTER

From Houston to Bangladesh—are we too late to stop catastrophic climate change?

Thu 2 Nov, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HACKNEY

Zionism and antisemitism—what are the arguments?

Wed 1 Nov, 6.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Zionism and antisemitism—what are the arguments?

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Zionism and antisemitism—what are the arguments?

Thu 2 Nov, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Syriza's failure in Greece—can Jeremy Corbyn avoid the same traps?

Thu 9 Nov, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd (near Greenwich main line and DLR station), SE10 8JA

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Austria—the rise of the far right in Europe

Wed 1 Nov, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite Bethnal Green Rd/Tesco), E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Harriet Tubman and the fight against slavery

Wed 8 Nov, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St), E17 4QU

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }

PUBLIC MEETINGS

100 years on...

Why should we celebrate the Russian Revolution?



Bolshevik by Boris Kustodiev

NORWICH

Thu 2 Nov, 7.30pm,
Wellbeing Centre,
15 Chapel Field,
NR2 1SF

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
International Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

Tue 7 Nov, 7.30pm,
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's,
OX1 1BX

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Community Centre,
River's St, PO5 4EZ

TELFORD

Thu 16 Nov, 7.30pm,
Carriages,
The Parade, Wellington,
TF1 1PY

WIGAN

Black Lives Matter—fighting racism today
Wed 1 Nov, 7pm,
Little Fifteen pub,
17-19 Wallgate (opposite Wigan Post Office), WN1 1LD

WOLVERHAMPTON

AND WALSALL
Austria and the far right in Europe
Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Wild Bytes Cafe,
Darlington St, WV1 4HW

YORK

Palestine and Israel—how can Palestine be free?
Wed 1 Nov, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

{ STAND UP TO RACISM }

LEICESTER
Rising Islamophobia, deaths in custody—where next for the fight against racism?
Wed 8 Nov, 7pm,
City of Retreat Community Centre,
70-74 Church Gate, LE1 4AL

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

DORCHESTER
Ireland—how the left made a breakthrough
Sat 4 Nov, 1.30pm,
Colliton Club,
Colliton Park,
DT1 1XJ.
Organised by Dorset Socialists

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Alex Callinicos—author of Imperialism & Global Political Economy
Dave Sherry—author of Russia 1917: Workers' Revolution and Festival of the Oppressed
Judith Orr—author of Marxism & Women's Liberation

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The cruel humour behind a mix of tradition and money

In the film *I Am Not a Witch*, a young girl is accused of witchcraft in Africa and is drawn into a world of corruption and sexism, writes **Charlie Kimber**

I AM Not a Witch is a highly unusual film that will make you think and wonder.

Made by Zambian-born Rungano Nyoni, it is part satire, part documentary and part fairy tale.

And like many fairy tales, it has elements of violence and darkness.

At its heart this is a film about the oppression of women, and how they are controlled and used.

The basic story is simple. A young girl is blamed for unusual happenings in her village.

She's denounced as a witch and shipped off to a witch camp.

This camp serves both as a dumping ground for older women who are seen as a burden on society, and as a freak show for tourists.

The women are also used as forced labour. The women are attached to spools of ribbon—"to stop them flying away", say the authorities.

Venal

It is a place that brings together a certain sort of cultural belief and the most venal money-making opportunity.

The young girl, named Shula by her fellow "witches", is more than a victim. She retains a certain strength and does not follow advice to "do as you are told".

Spotted by Mr Banda, a corrupt public servant with an eye for a quick buck, she is soon employed for her "special powers".

She picks criminals from a suspects' line-up, appears as an exotic oddity on a television show, and seeks to break a drought.

And throughout it all she never



SHULA IS more than a victim and retains a certain strength

gives the slightest indication that she believes she is a witch. She is just trying to survive.

Director Nyoni has said, "What I was interested in was this idea of how people impose rules, however absurd, on other people and how difficult it is to break away from the rules, even if they unspoken ones relating to society or tradition."

The film doesn't try to explain why quite large numbers of people in Africa believe in witchcraft.

I was sometimes worried that people watching the film might laugh in a supposedly superior way at the "stupid Africans".

Belief in witches is a form of scapegoating and a search for meaning often rooted in desperate poverty, fear and insecurity.

Those of us in Europe watch the media and politicians peddle the most irrational myths about, say, refugees.

We should not be surprised that

other forms of wild belief can take hold of a society.

There are sections of the film that are hard to understand, and scenes that seem to go on too long.

But it's a film you should see, not least for the last ten minutes.

This is a combination of desperate sadness, extraordinary images and powerful singing that you will remember for a long time.

I Am Not a Witch is in selected cinemas now

A powerful new novel about the Russian Revolution

BOOK

WINDS OF OCTOBER

Alan Gibbons
Circaid Gregory Press
£8.99

WINDS OF October is the first of a trilogy of novels by Alan Gibbons, the well known children's author and campaigner.

The story, intended for adults, is centred on events as they unfold in Petrograd. It is told through the lives and relationships of its characters.

Raisa is drawn into the revolution through her experiences as a former prostitute. Her lover,

Elena, is a young lesbian Bolshevik factory worker.

Kolya is a student who emerges as a new young Bolshevik leader.

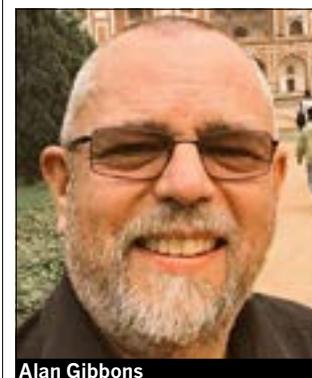
Pavel is a young soldier in love with Raisa, but who has to face the consequences of his lover Nina's pregnancy.

The story follows the main contours of the revolution from the women workers striking on International Women's Day, through Lenin's return and the arguments for socialist revolution.

It charts the revolts of the July days and General Kornilov's attempt to take back power before

the final triumph of the October insurrection.

But this is no superflattering account of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This is real men and women,



Alan Gibbons

arguing and debating every step of the way, sometimes with the Bolsheviks and sometimes against them.

Individuals grasp the opportunity to make history and change their personal lives, others doubt anything will really change.

Raisa comes face to face with former "clients" and wonders if men can be different.

Some characters insist on the use of violence to deal with counter-revolutionaries who have just shot their comrades, others are against.

All of this takes place in a Russia bleeding from war

and dying of hunger. When a royal palace is plundered of all its leather, Elena points out that workers and soldiers need boots.

Indeed, the contrast between opulence for the ruling class and squalor for the masses opens the novel when Raisa's services are sold to the aristocracy.

Her brutal fight to survive that encounter stands as an allegory for the revolution as a whole.

I really enjoyed *Winds of October* and look forward to the sequels, *Reason in Revolt* and *Spurn the Dust*.
Sheila McGregor

CALENDAR

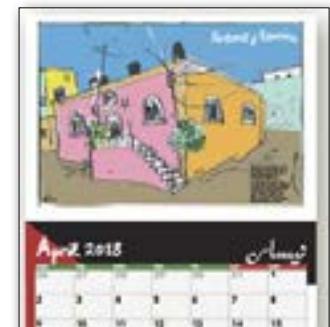
PORTRAIT OF PALESTINE

Images by Tim Sanders

TOWER HAMLETS Palestine Solidarity Campaign have produced a full colour A4 2018 calendar based on the work of Socialist Worker cartoonist Tim Sanders.

The 12 images were inspired by his trip to Palestine with Freedom Theatre last year.

It's a perfect Christmas gift and is available for £10 plus postage from bookmarksbookshop.co.uk or the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London



WC1B 3QE.

Bulk orders are available from thpalestine solidarity@gmail.com

EXHIBITION

POP ART FROM NORTH AFRICA

P21 Gallery, 21-27 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. Free. Until 4 November. p21.gallery

THIS EXHIBITION features the artworks of 15 artists from North Africa who are all inspired by the Pop Art movement.

It looks at the way the successful themes from other continents and international icons come to hold new value and meaning when situated in a very different environment.

There is an implicit critique of the supposed "American-Western" superiority.

GIG

GRIME4JUSTICE

Friday 17 November, 7pm, Kurdish Community Centre, 11 Portland Gardens, Haringey, N4 1HU. Tickets eventbrite.co.uk and search for Grime4Justice

THIS FUNDRAISER for the Justice4Edson campaign remembers Edson Da Costa, who died in June after being stopped by police in east London.

It is hosted by radio DJ and comedian Johnny Cochrane and features El Nino, M REAPZ and Oracy.

Organised by Haringey Love Music Hate Racism and SpeakerBoxStreetParty.

RECENT revelations about Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's abuse and rape of women have exposed the sexism at the heart of society.

Many people knew about Weinstein's behaviour, yet it continued for decades.

Several women have said they didn't come forward because they felt Weinstein was so powerful he would destroy their lives.

The violence and harassment he is accused of are all too common for women and girls across the world. But why does it happen?

In the wake of the revelations millions of women have used the #MeToo social media campaign to describe their experiences.

This echoes the Everyday Sexism website, which receives dozens of comments every day from women who have suffered sexism, harassment or assault.

Meanwhile parliamentary surveys show that a majority of girls and young women have been harassed at school or college.

As *Guardian* columnist Suzanne Moore wrote last week, "The experience of sexual harassment is not a one-off. It's the backdrop to many women's lives."

Unfortunately this can lead to the view that men and boys in general are the problem. In her column Moore deplored "All this collusion. All this male entitlement. All these men who still can't listen."

Majority

So are men the problem? And if not, what is?

The level of abuse directed at women is disgraceful. But we have to remember that the majority of men don't rape and abuse women.

Several men have written #MeToo posts expressing their disgust at the abuse that women suffer. Others have detailed their own experiences of abuse.

Men can behave in dreadful ways towards women. They should always be challenged—and be pushed to change.

But abuse happens because of the environment we live in, not our biology.

Women's oppression is structured into capitalist societies such as Britain's.

Women still get paid less on average than men for doing the same work. A "glass ceiling" stops women accessing top jobs.

Women are more likely to live in poverty. They still take more responsibility for housework and childcare than men.

And women make up the overwhelming majority of victims of rape and domestic violence while harassment is all too common.

This structural oppression

DONALD TRUMP who boasts of assaulting women, and Harvey Weinstein who faces dozens of allegations of harassment and rape

HOW CAN WE GET RID OF ABUSE?

Sexual harassment and abuse of women are commonplace. We have to challenge sexist behaviour—and fight to get rid of the class society that it's rooted in, argues Sadie Robinson

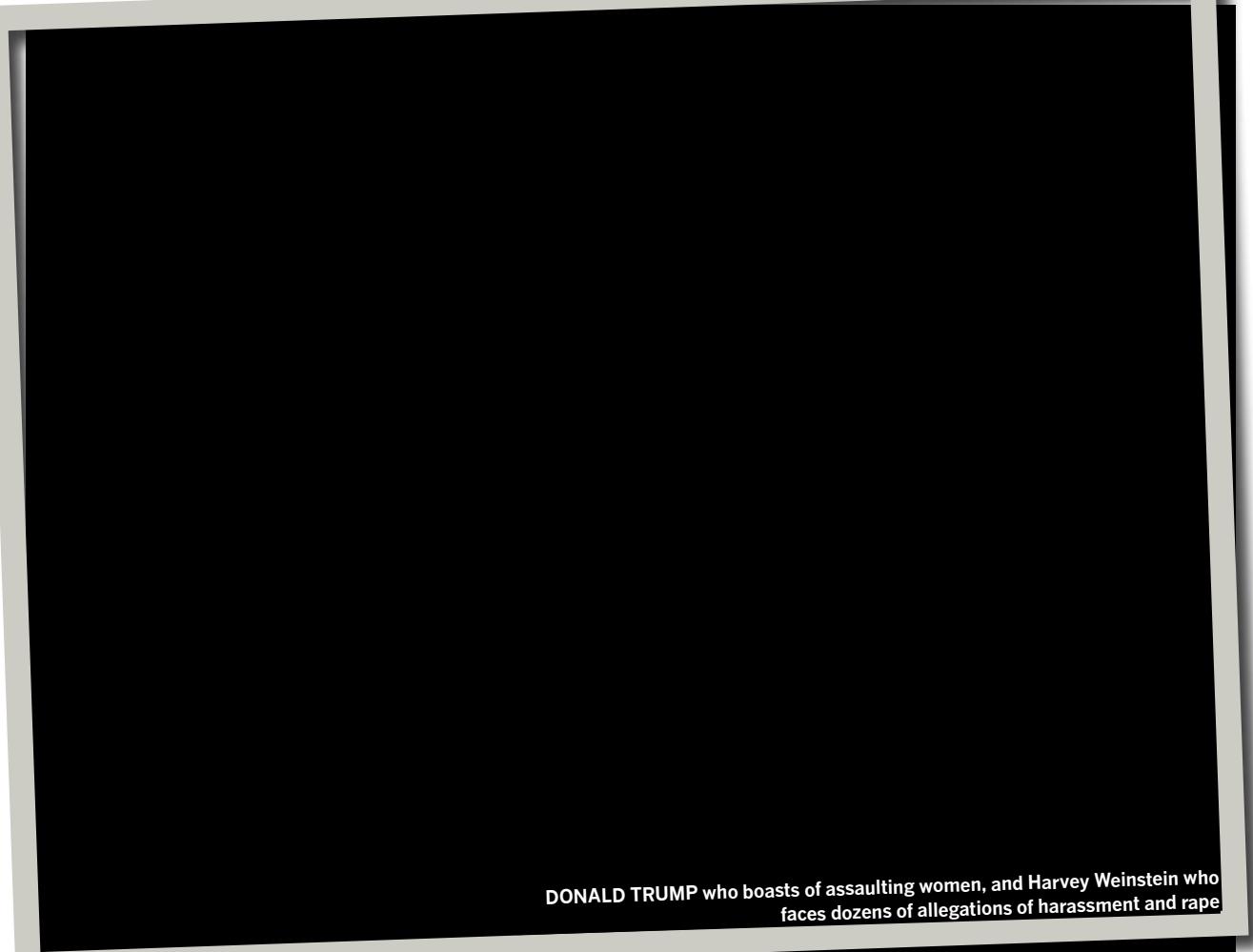
needs sexist attitudes in order to justify it.

The view that women's lives are less important than men's comes from the top.

Some judges give lenient sentences for rape because they say the woman was at fault—or that a harsher sentence would damage the man's life.

Cops consistently fail to take crimes against women seriously. And there are MPs—men and women—who constantly try to limit women's access to

“
The oppression of women is structured into capitalist societies



attitudes. We are bombarded with images of women as sexually available objects.

Think of all the advertising that uses women's bodies to sell products. Or the fashion, beauty and cosmetic surgery industries that encourage women to have a disproportionate focus on their looks.

Women are objectified and stereotyped in films, the press, popular music, TV quiz shows and soap operas.

We are told that this objectification is "liberating". In reality, capitalism has alienated and distorted sexuality.

Women are treated as commodities to be bought, sold or stolen. All of this lays the basis for violence against women.

Our rulers promote the idea that it's in our "nature" as men and women to behave in certain ways.

And they blame any problems—whether it's violence against women or poverty—on individuals.

Otherwise we might blame society, and our rulers have an interest in upholding that society and so present it in the best possible light.

BUT SEXISM isn't natural. If it was, it would exist always and everywhere. Yet anthropologists have studied many societies where such oppression was unheard of.

For instance, Eleanor Leacock found evidence of several societies where women's oppression didn't exist.

These include the Native America Naskapi hunter-gatherers who lived in Canada.

Leacock found "wide dispersal of decision-making among mature and elder women and men". Men had no authority or superior status over women.

Leacock, like Frederick Engels, argued that women's oppression developed with the rise of the family, social classes and the state.

Production developed to the point where there was a surplus, and a group that became the ruling class came to control it. The need for "legitimate" heirs to pass this onto required more policing of women's sexuality.

Changes in production prioritised men's labour over women's and women's key role became bearing and raising children.

The family is critical to the system because it produces the next generation of workers, and sustains the current workforce for free.

Oppression is rooted in the family, which is why many politicians today still present it as the norm and something to aspire to.

The truth is that most violence against women and children happens in the home.

In contrast, women didn't occupy an inferior position in pre-class societies. These were

based on cooperation, not competition. So oppression hasn't always existed—and it's been pushed back during revolutionary situations too.

Before the 1917 Russian Revolution women were seen as the property of men and it was legal for peasant men to whip their wives.

Protests and strikes by women workers kicked off the revolution in February. And as the revolution unfolded, women's position was transformed. Divorce and abortion were legalised.

Women won the full right to vote—at a time when only women in Norway and Denmark had the same right. The revolutionary government brought in equal pay, equal rights at work and maternity pay.

COMMUNAL nurseries, restaurants and laundries shifted the responsibility for this work from individual women onto society.

In 1919 and 1920 some 90 percent of Petrograd's population ate communally.

More recently in Egypt, a revolution in 2011 saw women and men take to the streets to drive out hated dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Women played a leading role in the revolution and in strikes leading up to it. There were big protests to defend women following attacks by the military.

As revolutionary Mahienour El-Massry put it, "With time society starts looking at you not as a woman who is weak and helpless, but as a human."

In both cases, vicious counter-revolutions pushed back the gains that women had made.

In Russia the dictator Joseph Stalin promoted marriage and abolished legal abortion.

Yet these rapid changes in women's lives show that oppression is not natural, nor the result of the mindset or biology of individual men.

Accepting the idea that men are to blame for oppression lets the system off the hook. It encourages us to see other working class people as the enemy instead of our rulers.

It also often goes along with the idea that men benefit from women's oppression.

Yet men aren't better off if women don't have abortion rights. Men don't get pay rises just because women's pay is held down. Their experience is

different, but it's only the bosses who benefit from division and low pay.

And the idea that working class men benefit from the system glosses over the harsh reality of their lives.

Men aged between 20 and 49 in Britain are more likely to die from killing themselves than any other cause.

Capitalism fails ordinary people—men and women—and women's oppression is key to propping it up.

That means that working class men and women have a common interest in uniting to get rid of both.

Oppression flows from class societies that have existed for less than 10 percent of human history. We can get rid of it—if we get rid of the system that breeds it.

These were the soviets—mass councils of workers, peasants and soldiers.

Through the soviets ordinary people transformed society and for the first time had real control over the big decisions that affected their lives. So, as Lenin put it, there were in fact "two governments" in Petrograd. The capitalist Provisional Government held state power. The other, the Petrograd



Capitalist state power versus soviet power

As the Russian Revolution developed a situation of dual power existed—but it was unsustainable

ONE HUNDRED years ago capitalism in Russia—which had only just struggled into existence—was already dying.

Within weeks the capitalist state would be demolished by the new and burgeoning power of organised workers, and finished off by the October Revolution.

The old system was about to be replaced by the new.

But in the months leading up to October the two powers existed together, interlocking but ultimately threatening to wipe each other out.

This type of situation can only exist in periods of profound revolutionary change. Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin described it as "dual power".

Both powers were born of the same revolutionary struggle. A workers' uprising in the Russian capital Petrograd—the 1917 February Revolution—overthrew the centuries-old rule of the Tsars.

But although that revolt was won by ordinary workers, the new official government was controlled by Russian capitalists.

Weak

Before February, Russia's weak capitalist class had grown as part of the old Tsarist regime. But they exploited the Tsar's downfall to set up their own state.

Yet at the same time—as in every great revolt—ordinary people set up their own organisations to wage struggle.

The soviets—mass councils of workers, peasants and soldiers.

Through the soviets ordinary people transformed society and for the first time had real control over the big decisions that affected their lives. So, as Lenin put it, there were in fact "two governments" in Petrograd.

The capitalist Provisional Government held state power. The other, the Petrograd

it still had to appeal to the revolution for legitimacy.

Even Russia's continued involvement in the First World War was justified by the government as in defence of the revolution.

Some socialists, such as the Menshevik party, thought they could straddle the two.

Yet this setup couldn't last. Although both powers were "interlocking", they represented two classes in society that are completely opposed to each other.

Oppression
Both the capitalist government and the soviets were different forms of state power. But as Lenin explained, "The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another."

The capitalist state exists to defend the interests of those at the top of society whose position is based on exploiting the larger working class. Its power ultimately lies in the tools it has—the police and the army—to repress workers.

The soviets' state existed to defend the new society based on workers' control.

To survive it had to defeat the capitalists' attempt to crush it.

Capitalist bosses started trying to sabotage the revolution. And politicians in the capitalist government wanted to crush the soviets.

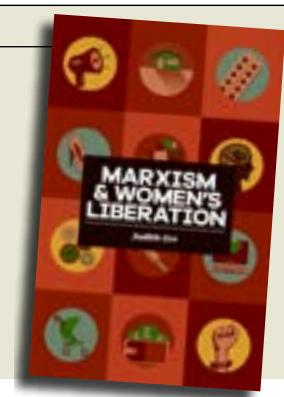
There had to be a final confrontation. That confrontation came in October.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution bit.ly/2gEgjoF

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- Sexism is what stops reporting of rape Socialist Worker bit.ly/2ggMsfy
- Marxism and women's liberation by Judith Orr £9.99

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The government and the soviets were different forms of state power

Croydon defendants deny Reker attack

by ALISTAIR FARROW

THE TRIAL of six people charged with violent disorder in relation to events that left Kurdish teenager Reker Ahmed fighting for his life is underway at Croydon crown court.

George Walder, Liam Neylon, Daryl Davis, Danyelle Davis, and Kyran Evans are each charged with two counts of violent disorder.

Kurt Killick has been charged with grievous bodily harm with intent as well as two counts of violent disorder.

They all deny the charges.

On Wednesday of last week the court heard evidence from Killick as the defence began presenting its case.

"I ran over and pushed Reker to the floor," said Killick. "I kicked him twice in the legs."

CCTV footage detailed some of the events that left Reker Ahmed with a fractured spine and a bleed on his brain.

It shows Killick with three people outside The Goat pub



GRAFFITI IN the Shrubland area after the attack

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

in the Shrublands area.

Two men—Reker Ahmed and Dilshad Mohammed—approach Killick's group and then walk away.

One man, George Walder, then comes out of the pub, joins Killick, and the pair walk after Reker and Dilshad.

Reker and Dilshad are then joined by their friend Hamo Mustafa. A fight breaks out after Walder punches Hamo in the face.

Hamo told the jury he was told to "go back to your country". Giving evidence, Walder said, "I have black friends,

Muslim friends, other friends of different kinds, friends who are Turkish and Kurdish."

This fight was to be the beginning of the first of two attacks on Reker in a period of some 16 minutes on 31 May this year.

Killick claimed he was knocked over and attacked on the ground during the first incident.

Shortly after this, CCTV footage shows Killick return to the pub.

Reker is knocked to the ground. Walder remained outside but denied hitting Reker while he was on the ground.

Prosecutor Jonathan Polnay told him, "You were completely pumped up for violence. You get started by punching a man in the head. You are then involved in a fight and you are then involved in a chase."

Evidence

In his evidence Killick said he went into the pub to get George Walder's brother.

CCTV then shows him emerging from the pub with four other people.

Footage then shows him crouching next to Reker near to the bus stop.

"I didn't punch him," said Killick.

Polnay, cross examining Killick, said, "That's a big lie isn't it Mr Killick?"

Killick claimed he couldn't

see any of the people attacking Reker. "I didn't stay to watch," he said.

The court heard how, after this attack, Reker was at the bottom of Shrublands Avenue near The Goat pub.

The CCTV shows a group of people running and following Reker. Killick agreed that images showed him following behind.

When asked why he followed he said, "I went up Shrublands Avenue to see what was going on."

Killick continued, saying, "He was getting kicked. I could see a lot of kicks."

Polnay asked Killick to agree whether what he had seen was brutal. "Yes," came the answer.

"I was shouting, 'Stop, stop,'" said Killick.

He said, "When I started shouting stop I could hear someone say, 'Strip him'."

Polnay questioned this account. "It was you who was shouting, 'Strip him' wasn't it?" Killick denied the accusation.

Killick admitted to not phoning an ambulance or contacting the police.

The trial continues.

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Celebrate the 1967 Act—and extend abortion rights too

Fifty years ago the 1967 Abortion Act marked a major breakthrough for working class women. Sarah Bates looks at what life was like before the Act—and why abortion rights are so crucial

 THIS MONTH marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act—one of the most important breakthroughs for working class women.

The Act meant that women no longer had to resort to illegal and dangerous backstreet abortions. But it didn't provide "abortion on demand" as right wingers claim.

It has serious drawbacks—it was never extended to Northern Ireland and some women still have problems accessing abortion services.

But it meant that doctors were able to perform abortions without being prosecuted under the Offences against the Persons Act 1861.

Jan grew up in the 1960s and remembers what it was like before the Act.

"Abortion was an open secret growing up," she told Socialist Worker. "You would hear stories about women throwing themselves down stairs, or having hot baths and gin to induce abortion."

Ireland

"I knew of people visiting from Ireland. No one said openly why they were there, but everyone knew it was to have an abortion."

The results of these abortions, carried out under illegal conditions, were dangerous and sometimes fatal. Some 4,000 women died as a result of backstreet abortion in Britain in 1966.

Steve was 11 when his mum died because of a complication from a backstreet abortion. "She couldn't afford an abortion legally, but knew of someone from a neighbouring village who could do it," he told Socialist Worker.

"She became ill very quickly, but didn't tell anyone about it because it was an imprisonable offence."



PART OF the 1979 TUC protest against the Corrie Bill

PICTURE: JOHN STURROCK

"She told nobody—and my brother had to raise the alarm. It should be up to women to make decisions about their body. All this moralising means women die."

But not everyone had to resort to the backstreet—even before 1967 richer women were able to access abortion in private clinics.

Pam spoke to Socialist Worker about the people who performed illegal abortions. "Some would charge you money,

but others were sympathetic and just wanted to help," she said.

"They wouldn't always take care of people afterwards though, so if you bled too much you'd have to go to hospital."

Today decisions about abortions still rest in the hands of doctors. A woman still needs the agreement of two doctors in order to have an abortion. And doctors can refuse to perform the procedure citing

conscientious objections. The 1967 Act has withstood multiple attacks, most notably the 1979 Corrie Bill. It remains a major breakthrough. But the fight for abortion on demand continues.

Beyond the Backstreet—Fighting for Abortion Rights 50 Years on.
A celebration and discussion hosted by Abortion Rights. Saturday 28 October, 10.30am, Rich Mix, London E1 6LA. For details go to abortionrights.org.uk/beyond-the-backstreet/

'Sometimes people died, or would end up in hospital'

 BEFORE THE 1967 Act working class women seeking an abortion had to rely on underground networks of support.

Mary Phillips in south London let young women stay with her following their backstreet abortions.

Mary told Socialist Worker, "They were always terrified, and sometimes they were teenagers."

"They were so scared they would give me a false name."

Across Britain the lack of legal abortion had a devastating effect on women.

"Sometimes people died, or would end up in hospital—which was also distressing as they weren't able to tell the hospital staff how they got the abortion," said Mary.

"The passing of the Act was brilliant."

"But 50 years on its limitations still anger me."

Pam was a school teacher and NUT union activist in Newham, east London, at the time of the 1979 Corrie Bill, which tried to restrict abortion rights.

The TUC called a mass protest against it.



A placard on a pro-choice protest in 2008 to defend abortion rights

Pam told Socialist Worker, "There was absolutely a class divide.

"If you were a princess you would get flown over to Switzerland to have an abortion. But we couldn't get a safe one."

"We raised support for the TUC protest in our NUT branch, and nine out of 11 teachers came on it."

"It made a fantastic difference—it was powerful."

"It changed my colleagues' minds about trade unions, they began to see how unions could have an impact."

Struggle can win changes

 THERE HAVE been attempts to undermine the 1967 Act from the day it was passed. But there has also been mass resistance.

A popular tactic is to try to reduce the cut-off date for legal abortions.

This was originally set at 28 weeks and was cut to 24 weeks in 1990. But just 2 percent of abortions take place after 20 weeks.

Attacks on time limits are attempts to chip away at a woman's right to choose.

The Act doesn't reflect medical advances that have made abortion easier than ever.

It doesn't cover abortion pills. So if a woman buys pills to medically induce an abortion she could be prosecuted with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Battle

A key battle today is demanding the extension of the Act to Northern Ireland.

Women in Northern Ireland pay the same national insurance as women in England, and receive most of the same NHS treatments.

Except they still have to travel to England to access abortion services.

And until June this year they were expected to fund the cost of the procedures themselves.

There have been movements across the world, from Ireland to Poland, to extend a woman's right to choose. We should take inspiration from these and continue to fight for abortion rights.

IN BRIEF

Mears workers vote for further strikes

MEARS housing maintenance workers in Manchester are preparing for "substantial" strikes next month.

The 180 Unite union members have voted to renew their dispute over pay differentials and terms and conditions. They struck for more than 40 days earlier this year.

The workers maintain over 12,000 council homes managed by Northwards Housing.

Defend activist from jail term

PEACE protesters gathered at Cardiff Crown Court on Monday to give solidarity to Deirdre Murphy who faced a trial after direct action against the Cardiff arms fair.

She could face jail for her protest at the Defence Procurement, Research, Technology and Exportability event in the city.

Cleaners want to sweep away low pay

CLEANERS AT Manchester Airport have announced a series of nine strikes starting in November and running into December and January.

The Unite union members are demanding an extra £1 an hour from contractor Mitie. The first strike is a 24-hour walkout on Friday of next week.

Don't let laws leave strike grounded

ENGINEERS, firefighters and security guards at Heathrow Airport in the Unite union have all voted for action over pay and conditions

But security guards did so on a turnout of just under 50 percent.

The Tories' anti-union laws mean they cannot officially strike.

Unite should call out the others—and security guards could come out unofficially.

Film workers to vote on major deal

MEMBERS OF the Bectu arm of the Prospect union are voting on a Motion Picture Agreement.

The deal will apply to union members working on films with budgets over £30 million.

It sets a 55-hour standard working week over five days among other terms.

Firefighters walk out at Sellafield

SOME firefighters at the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant struck for higher pay last Thursday.

They are GMB union members. A separate dispute over pay could see around 5,000 GMB and Unite union members strike together.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

Children's centres face the Tory axe in Cambridgeshire

YOUNG MOTHERS with babies and toddlers, grandparents and trade unionists demanded entry into the council chamber in Cambridge last Tuesday.

They were protesting against plans to axe 30 out of 40 children's centres across Cambridgeshire.

After some argument members of the public were allowed access. The Tory

councillors' excuses for the closures were met with angry shouts and heckles.

Even though parents were struggling to entertain toddlers and babies in the chamber, they stayed for more than two hours.

Many hoped that the protests would continue.

Paula Champion

● Longer version on socialistworker.co.uk



PARENTS DEMAND access to the council chamber in Cambridge

JOB CENTRE WORKERS

Brave struggle shows need for national fight

by NICK CLARK

WORKERS AT a Sheffield jobcentre began a four-week strike on Monday—a final stand against the closure of their office.

PCS union members at the Sheffield Eastern Avenue jobcentre have waged a brave fight against plans to close their office.

It's just one of a raft of planned office closures across the Department for Work and Pension (DWP).

The workers announced their strike dates after being told last week the office closure was being moved forward to 17 November. And they learned on Monday that the closure would be brought even earlier—to next Friday.

PCS rep Clare Goonan told Socialist Worker, "It doesn't make any difference to the strike because we're striking on our principles."

Jobcentre workers and users will relocate to another office in Sheffield city centre. The



Taking a stand at Sheffield Eastern Avenue jobcentre

PAY CAMPAIGNS


FBU firefighters' union members outside parliament

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Unions need to organise anger against Tory pay cap

ANGER AGAINST the Tories' 1 percent public sector pay cap was clear on the streets of central London last Tuesday.

According to the TUC union federation some 1,000 trade unionists marched from Downing Street to protest in Parliament Square.

And around 100 people joined a rally against the pay cap in Northampton last Saturday.

Yasmin, a PCS union member in London, told Socialist Worker, "It's absolutely disgraceful—what the lower and middle grades are taking home is tiny."

The PCS is holding a consultative ballot asking members if they'd be willing to strike to breach the cap.

And activists have found enthusiastic responses when they've organised activities around the ballot. Yasmin said, "I'd absolutely strike, I'm telling members to vote."

PCS members plan to protest on their pay day next Tuesday. The campaign

should be used as an opportunity to build support for a strike and to recruit to the union.

The UCU union plans to ballot some further education colleges.

With inflation hitting a five-year high, now is the time to fight for above inflation pay rises.

Some unions hope to wait for a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government.

But it's not inevitable that the Tories will fall and Labour leaders have said they would not give above-inflation rises.

At the TUC rally Unison union general secretary Dave Prentis said, "When the time comes—as it will—to strike I want to see everyone on the picket lines with us."

That time has come—the unions need to ballot their members. With Theresa May's government weak and divided, strikes could not only break the pay cap but break the Tories.

Thanks to John Henry

HOUSING

Social cleansing of Haringey in the dock

HOUSING campaigners have lodged a formal complaint against Haringey council's decision to let the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) off the hook from rehousing tenants.

The HDV, a £2 billion redevelopment project between the north London council and Lendlease, will see seven estates demolished.

Hundreds face uncertainty as the HDV's business plan does not allow for the rehousing of housing association tenants.

Activists have launched a judicial review of the HDV, which is set to take

place at the Royal Courts of Justice this Wednesday and Thursday.

They have called a protest outside the hearing from 9am on Wednesday.

■ TENANTS ARE demanding that they be allowed to vote on the proposed merger of the Notting Hill and Genesis housing associations.

Tenants plan to hold a meeting to discuss the merger plans on Saturday of this week.

Housing association bosses announced the merger on the London stock exchange before residents were informed about it,

signalling the priorities behind it.

■ Joint ListenNHH & Genesis Residents Meeting on Facebook

■ RYHURST IS set to cash in on the redevelopment of buildings at Whittington Hospital in north London.

It's a subsidiary company of Rydon, which carried out the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower before the blaze.

Shirley Franklin, Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition chair, said, "We spent the last years fighting cuts and got them overturned.

"We need to get this overturned."

DURHAM teaching assistants (TAs) who are unhappy with a new pay deal were set to hold a solidarity event on Thursday.

TAs in the Unison union, which represents the majority of the workforce, voted to accept the deal by

62 percent on a 54 percent turnout. The deal, cooked up between Unison and the Labour-run council, still sees 472 TAs lose pay.

● Go to Facebook event **Durham TA'S Stand In Solidarity** for details

Turn to page 9 for more

LECTURERS

Strike against cuts that harm education

by SADIE ROBINSON

WORKERS AT the University of Manchester began a two-day strike on Monday. Over 1,800 UCU union members are fighting bosses' plans to impose 140 job cuts.

There were big picket lines at the university's entrances on the first day of the strike.

Students brought food for pickets before strikers and their supporters rallied in the student union.

UCU president Joanna de Groot told the rally there was "serious national concern" in the union about the situation at the university.

"Decently treated staff are key to high quality of teaching and research," she said. "When they injure staff, they injure students, they injure research."

Union members backed strikes by 87 percent on a turnout of nearly 58 percent. Over 93 percent backed action short of a strike too and UCU members were set to begin a work to rule from Wednesday.

Joanna said the strike was "massively supported" and added, "We can mobilise members. We can show our strength."

Michael McKrell from the University of Central Lancashire spoke about a



STUDENTS JOIN lecturers on the picket line

PICTURE: GEOFF BROWN

similar struggle of UCU members there.

"Our branch three years ago was facing compulsory redundancies and the imposition of new contracts," he said. "We successfully fought and we did so only with the threat of taking strike action."

Michael added that UCU members at the University of Manchester had done an "amazing job" in meeting the ballot threshold in the Trade Union Act.

"That was designed to keep the workers' voice silent," he said. "You are living proof that that strategy has failed."

Deej Malik-Johnson, campaigns officer at the students union, told the rally, "Students will always stand behind you. We know what the job market is like out there. If we don't fight with you now, what are we going to face?"

Shadow education secretary and MP for

Ashton-under-Lyne Angela Rayner sent a message of support calling on bosses to "get their house in order".

There is no need for cuts. The university recorded a £36 million recorded surplus last year and has £1.5 billion in reserves. More strikes can force the bosses to back down.

Send messages of support to UCU branch secretary Adam Ozanne at adam.ozanne@manchester.ac.uk

PENSIONS

Big vote for USS action

UCU UNION members in older universities have voted overwhelmingly to back industrial action over pensions in a consultation.

Some 87 percent of those voting said they would be prepared to take industrial action to defend their USS pension scheme. The turnout was 55 percent—which may be the biggest ever turnout for a UCU national consultation.

It shows the potential for exceeding the new thresholds in the Trade Union Act. And it shows that union members can be mobilised.

The USS defined benefits scheme could be replaced with a defined contributions scheme. This would slash the value of pensions by half or more. And it wouldn't just affect new members, existing members would be hit too.

That's why there is so much anger.

Now we are preparing for a special conference to discuss pay and pensions on 9 November. UCU branches should meet and put motions to the conference, which is almost certain to vote for a national ballot.

If that goes ahead, I'm pretty sure we're going to see one of the most well-supported strikes in higher education.

Carlo Morelli

Carlo Morelli is a member of the UCU's national executive committee. Download motions to discuss in your UCU branch at uculeft.org and watch Carlo explain the USS dispute at uculeft.org/2017/10/uss-crisis-explained/

ENVIRONMENT

Choke up the chokers

PROTESTERS WERE set to block roads in central London on Wednesday evening in an escalation of the Stop Killing Londoners campaign against air pollution.

Air pollution, largely from traffic, leads to almost 10,000 early deaths a year in London.

London mayor Sadiq Khan promised to tackle it, largely through charges for the worst polluting vehicles.

These are far from perfect—they penalise poorer drivers and let the rich carry on polluting.

Protesters want Khan to invest in pollution-free electric vehicles

● Go to Stop Killing Londoners on Facebook

FRACKING

Protest on 4 November

PROTESTERS AGAINST fracking in Kirby Misperton, North Yorkshire, have called for trade unionists to show their support in person on Saturday 4 November.

Other fracking campaigns and the Unite union's Community section are organising transport.

Third Energy is building a rig that could start fracking as early as this week.

This would make it the first fracking operation in Britain in six years.

Two activists climbed the rig on Monday.

They will need more support to stop the fracking going ahead.

● Go to Kirkby Misperton Solidarity event on Facebook for details

BUS WORKERS

Arriva drivers pull the brake on rotten pay offer

OVER 2,000 bus workers in north west England struck for two days over pay. Unite and GMB members at Arriva buses struck on Thursday last week and Monday this week.

Another strike is planned for next Monday unless bosses concede an acceptable settlement.

The actions comes after Arriva's latest pay offer, which is just 31p extra an hour and increases the pay differences between depots.

Unite says the new offer will mean pay can vary up to £2 an hour from one depot to another.

Drivers at 11 depots took part, with big picket lines including around 80 at Birkenhead.

In some depots not a single driver crossed the picket line and every service had to be cancelled.

There were more than 40 pickets at the Bolton depot at 4am on Monday.

Drivers originally from Poland helped to persuade the few non-union members that turned up for work to join the picket line.

Engineers not involved in the dispute stayed away from work.

Senior managers handed out hi-vis jackets to the pickets "to keep them safe".

Payments to Arriva's highest paid director totalled £4.4 million last year.

Neil Mcalister

RAIL WORKERS

Reject this unsafe and divisive Southern rail deal

TRAIN DRIVERS' union Aslef has recommended a deal to its members to end their long-running dispute with Southern rail.

The new deal would mean a 28 percent pay rise over five years and the promise of a second safety trained person on board—except in "exceptional circumstances".

Govia Thameslink Railways owns the Southern Rail franchise and bosses there have left a very broad remit about what "exceptional circumstances" mean.

It includes trains running late, or staff being late or ill.

That means the guarantee is worthless.

Aslef members have twice thrown out deals in February and April to end the strike—and should do so again.

This one does not fully

protect a second safety-trained member of staff

It lets bosses take the guard off the train in situations that are not exceptional but are part of the normal running of the service.

Accepting the deal also means abandoning the RMT union members who are in a major battle with Southern.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said, "Once again RMT has been excluded from these negotiations.

"From what we have seen so far, this is exactly the sort of deal that Southern and Tory transport secretary Chris Grayling have been hoping for—and which drivers and guards have been fighting against.

"You cannot put a price on the safety and welfare of passengers and drivers."

HOSPITAL WORKERS



Exeter porters stand firm

PORTERS AT the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital trust struck against plans to change shifts from eight hours to 12 hours.

The Unison union members struck last Friday and on Monday. There will be a weekend-long strike soon if

managers don't back off. Porters already walk an average of 12 miles a shift.

Their ballot saw a 100 percent turnout and a 96 percent vote for action.

Richard Bradbury

● Sign the support petition at bit.ly/2ylyGyO

PART OF a huge demonstration against repression in Barcelona last Saturday

CATALANS BUILD THE FIGHTBACK

THE SPANISH state's repression of the Catalan government and independence movement has provoked furious resistance.

Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy of the right wing Popular Party (PP) is in the process of shutting down the Catalan government.

The Catalan parliament was set to meet this Thursday to discuss a response—which could mean declaring independence.

Around half a million people demonstrated in Barcelona last Saturday.

Activists pledged that “walls of people” would prevent the Spanish state from occupying Catalan institutions.

Student organisations called a two-day strike on Wednesday and Thursday of this week under the slogan, “You can't jail a whole people.”

Saturday's protest was originally called to demand the release of Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart, jailed leaders of the pro-independence organisations ANC and Omnium Cultural.

Around 200,000 people

demonstrated in Barcelona last Tuesday against the decision to jail them.

And in Barcelona, Girona and some other areas there were nightly “Cassoladas”—noise demonstrations in working class areas or outside strategic buildings.

Two of the biggest pro-independence parties in the Catalan parliament, the centre left Esquerra and anti-capitalist CUP, argued for new general strikes to be called.

There are discussions about a coordinated strike involving at least three major union federations.

Symbolism

David Karvala from the revolutionary group Marx 21 said, “The political symbolism of jailing the leaders of the ANC and the Omnium Cultural for having participated in a peaceful protest is enormous.

“The authorities are saying that with their judicial and police power they can do whatever they want.

“The answer must be massive popular mobilisation. We must show that collectively we have more strength than them.”

We must show that together we have more strength than they do

powers. Its functions would be assumed by the relevant ministries in Madrid.

The Spanish state would assume veto powers over Catalonia's finances, including budgets and taxes.

Catalonia's police force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, would come under direct Spanish state control.

Members of the Catalan force can also “be replaced by state security forces”.

Force

Rajoy's plan is to force fresh elections in Catalonia and hope that pro-independence parties would lose their majority in the Catalan parliament.

Rajoy has begun moves to sack the entire Catalan government and call new elections in Catalonia within six months. This was set to be ratified by the Spanish senate on Friday.

The leaders of both the European Union and the Spanish and Catalan equivalents of the Labour Party support Rajoy's crackdown.

Catalan president Carles Puigdemont's government would be stripped of its

he pretends. Almost 20,000 Guardia Civil and other Spanish state forces were unable to prevent people voting in an independence referendum on 1 October.

Despite vicious police attacks that saw over 800 people hospitalised, 92 percent of voters backed independence on a 43 percent turnout.

But the danger is that Rajoy's moves are met by hesitation and calls for “moderation” from Puigdemont.

Puigdemont declared independence over a week after the vote—then immediately announced that he had “suspended” it.

But his strategy of holding back from an independence declaration and pleading for negotiations has failed.

The best response to the repression would be strikes, mass demonstrations and a declaration of independence that's linked to a vision of a society that puts people before profit.

On other pages
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